

Message Text

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47

ACTION AF-06

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3998

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 1162

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI AO

SUBJECT: HIGH COMMISSIONER DISCUSSES HIS ASSUMPTION OF POWER

REF: LUANDA 1153

1. I TALKED ON AUGUST 16 WITH ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER GENERAL MACEDO ABOUT HIS ASSUMPTION OF THE POWERS GRANTED IN THE ALVOR AGREEMENT TO THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL. HE SAID HE WAS DISTURBED BY REPORTS CIRCULATING ABROAD THAT THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN OVER THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT. THE MEASURE, HE SAID, IS A TEMPORARY ONE DESIGNED TO PERMIT THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT TO GO FORWARD. IT IS ADMINISTRATIVE IN NATURE AND IN NO WAY CHANGES PORTUGAL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT. AS MATTERS STOOD BEFORE HE ISSUED HIS COMMUNIQUE, THE GOVERNMENT WAS PARALYZED. THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL PRESENT WAS LOPO DE NASCIMENTO OF THE MPLA AND UNDER THE TERMS OF ALVOR HE HAD NO LEGAL AUTHORITY TO SIGN DECREES. AGAIN, MANY OF THE MINISTERS ARE ABSENT AND NOBODY WAS SIGNING ORDERS AND REGULATIONS. MACEDO WILL NOW SIGN FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL

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AND/OR THE MINISTERS, DEPENDING UPON THE NATURE OF THE DOCUMENT.

HE CANNOT, HOWEVER, SIGN DECREE LAWS; THESE ARE LEGISLATIVE IN NATURE AND REQUIRE THE VOTE OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL.

2. AS FOR PORTUGAL'S POLICY REVIEW ON ANGOLA, MACEDO SAID THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED. THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING DESPARATELY TO COME UP WITH A FORMULA, BUT NOTHING SEEMS FEASIBLE. DISCUSSIONS ARE UNDERWAY WITH A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO TRY AND FIND SOME FORMULA THAT THE THREE MOVEMENTS WOULD ACCEPT AS A NEGOTIATING BASE. COMMANDER CONTRERAS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IS IN LUANDA TO DO A STUDY AND REPORT BACK. AT THE MOMENT LISBON IS NOT CONSIDERING ACCEPTING A PARTITION OF ANGOLA. SUCH A SOLUTION, SAID MACEDO, JUST DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A VISABLE ALTERNATIVE.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE ORDER BY MINISTER OF FINANCE SAYDI MINGAS PUTTING PRIVATE BANKS UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL, I TOLD MACEDO THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT IF HIS COMMUNIQUE PRECEDED MINGAS' ORDER, THE LATTER WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT. MACEDO SAID THIS WAS NONSENSE. MINGAS' ORDER PRECEDED MACEDO'S, BUT EVEN IF IT HADN'T, THE MINISTERS CAN STILL ISSUE ORDERS (DESPACHES), AND IT WAS A DESPACHE THAT MINGAS ISSUED. MACEDO SAID HE HAS CONSULTED LISBON ABOUT THE BANK PROBLEM AND EXPECTS INSTRUCTIONS SHORTLY. HE BELIEVES THE MEASURE WAS A SOUND ONE, AS IT WILL HELP PREVENT A FURTHER DRAIN OF FOREIGN RESERVES. HIS ONLY PROBLEM IS WHETHER IT SHOULD BE REDONE AND ISSUED BY A HIGHER AUTHORITY.

4. I ASKED MACEDO ABOUT THE MILITARY SITUATION. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT FNLA WILL TRY A MAJOR OFFENSIVE FROM CAXITO, BUT WILL MAKE ITS BIGGEST PUSH IN THE LUCALA/MALANJE/SALAZAR REGION. I TOLD HIM THAT JOURNALISTS WERE REPORTING TANKS IN CARMONA. HE SAID HE HAS REPORTS OF SELF PROPELLED GUNS, BUT NOT TANKS. TWO SKYMASTERS ARE FLYING WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT INTO THE AREA, HE ADDED. I TOLD HIM OF THE RUMORS THEY WERE AMERICAN PLANES. HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT MARKINGS THEY HAD, BUT HE WAS SATISFIED THEY WERE NOT AMERICAN.

5. I ASKED ABOUT THE FOOD SHORTAGES IN LUANDA. MACEDO SAID THAT WITHOUT PRODUCE AND OTHER ITEMS FROM THE CENTER OF THE COUNTRY LUANDA WILL SOON BE IN BAD, IF NOT CRITICAL, SHAPE. THE MINISTRY
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OF ECONOMY HAS A GROUP WORKING ON ALTERNATE SOURCES FOOD AND HAS BEEN TASKED TO COME UP WITH OPTIONS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
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